

**Illinois Early Learning Council  
Space Capacity Committee**  
Friday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012  
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm  
33 W. Monroe, Suite 2400 – Chicago  
2800 Montvale Drive – Springfield

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Members Present (Chicago):** Kim Collins, Craig Duetsch (phone), Angela Farwig (staffer), Mario Garcia, Ireta Gasner, Holly Knicker (phone), Mark McHugh (co-chair), Carol Morris (phone), Olivia Roanhorse (former staffer), Bonnie Roelle, Samir Tanna, Dawn Thomas (phone), Martin Torres (co-chair)

**Members Absent:** Anita Andrews-Hutchinson, Bernard Cesarone, Shannon Christian, Rebecca Deang, Lauri Frichtl, Refugio Gonzales, Mary Griffith, Nakisha Hobbs, Amber Kirchhoff, Holly Knicker, Kellie Magnuson, Kate Maher, Giacomo Mancuso, Hilary Morreale, Carolyn Newberry Schwartz, Sessy Nyman, Tracy Ocomy, Sylvia Puente, Tony Raden, Cathy Reed, Loukisha Smart-Pennix, Kelley Talbot, Greg Will, Cindy Zumwalt

**Guests:** Emila Badrov (phone), Dana Brink (phone), Cory Davis, Dawit Hadgu (all from CPS)

**Welcome**

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 pm. Martin Torres welcomed committee members and members introduced themselves. The committee reviewed the minutes and it was suggested that the staffer edit the minutes to make it clear that the amounts currently allocated under the SAC grant for technical assistance (\$165,000) and for outreach and public awareness (\$100,000) are for the first year of the grant only and do not reflect the reduction in the SAC grant budget. The committee approved the November 3, 2011 meeting minutes with this change.

**Early Childhood Construction Grant Program Update – State**

Mark McHugh provided a brief update on the status of Early Childhood Construction Grant (ECCG) program applications, which were due to the Capital Development Board (CDB) on November 30, 2011. The goal is to have all applications reviewed in March; however, this may not be possible due to the number of applications and the wide variety among them. All application reviewers are state employees. Reviewers are using a scoring rubric based on the three criteria listed in the Request for Applications (community need, proposed program, and project readiness) in evaluating the applications.

The committee reviewed a memo prepared by the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD) containing a summary of the ECCG applications. Two hundred and twenty-seven (227) applications requesting a total of approximately \$540 million in ECCG funding were received. Kim Collins from OECD noted that the data in this summary could be shared, including with legislators to advocate for more funding. The committee noted that demand for this funding is high and that about 30% of the applications came from municipalities in the top 100 of the IECAM community need rankings (out of 706 total municipalities).

The committee then discussed other types of data regarding the ECCG applications that it would like to request from OECD. Ideas included:

- Number of applicants per municipality and Chicago community area and summary of project (type of project and requested dollar amount)
- Number of school-based vs. community-based applicants
- List of municipalities and Chicago community areas that did not apply for funding
- Demand by legislative district (number of applicants and dollar amounts requested)
- Number of successful grant applicants per municipality and Chicago community area
- Number of slots created by each successful applicant

It was noted that the committee should work to connect facilities funding to funding for operations, such that increased early childhood funding is available to support the increase in capacity made possible by ECCG funds.

**Next step:** Staffer will email the committee with list of data requests to be made to the OECD. Once the committee has approved, she will provide the data requests to the OECD.

### **SAC Grant Update**

Martin Torres informed the committee that while it was originally contemplated that the ECCG program would be implemented in two rounds, the OECD has decided to instead have only one round of funding due to the overwhelming demand. Therefore, plans to use SAC grant funds to support a public awareness campaign and technical assistance around the second round of ECCG funding no longer apply and the committee needs to consider alternative uses for these funds. The state is working to amend its proposal with the federal government in terms of content and timing regarding these funds. It was suggested that the SAC funds be used to provide successful ECCG applicants with technical assistance to implement the program. It was noted that the committee may want to consider using the funds in a way that does not involve a procurement process, as that process is long and strenuous and the deadline for spending the funds is April 2013.

### **Early Childhood Construction Grant Program Update – Chicago**

Martin updated the committee on the Chicago set-aside of the Early Childhood Construction Grant program. In mid-December, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) issued a press release describing the four school-based projects it intends to fund with approximately \$4.8 in ECCG funding. The four schools are located in the Belmont Cragin and South Lawndale community areas, which both ranked in the top ten of the Chicago community areas with the highest need as identified using the IECAM methodology. A one page handout summarizing the CPS ECCG projects was provided to the committee.

The committee had previously provided recommendations to CPS on its use of ECCG funds and the implementation of the ECCG programs. A copy of the letter containing these recommendations was shared with the committee. It was noted that CPS had implemented several of the committee's recommendations, including recommendations that CPS utilize the IECAM methodology in determining high need communities and that CPS allocate 50% of ECCG funding to community-based organizations. CPS has collaborated with the committee and it is apparent that much time and effort had been focused on utilizing ECCG funds to serve high need areas. The committee co-chairs had a conversation with CPS representatives in January regarding some of the renovation work that CPS is using ECCG funds to support. CPS assured the co-chairs that these renovations were needed and involved much more than routine maintenance work.

It was noted that schools in the CPS system were not eligible to apply to CDB for ECCG funds directly. Charter schools were eligible and may have applied. The committee also raised the concern that the CPS classrooms that are being created or renovated using ECCG funds could be converted

into other types of rooms. It was noted that a requirement of the ECCG grant was that new or improved facilities must be used for early childhood programs for ten years.

Turning to the community-based portion of the Chicago set-aside of the ECCG program, the co-chairs informed the committee CPS had developed a rough timeline for releasing an RFA to community-based organizations. Dawit Hadgu, the project manager from CPS, distributed a process map for the RFA to the committee for its review. Dawit walked the committee through the process as laid out in the process map. Key points of the discussion included:

- CPS has applied for approximately \$4.8 million of the \$9 million allocated for the Chicago set-aside of the ECCG program.
- CDB told CPS that the application submitted on November 30 for the \$4.8 million in funding could be amended.
- CPS is drafting the RFA and it will be reviewed by all departments. Final approval will be with the legal department.
- The process map indicates that CPS will partner with the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) in the review of proposals submitted by community-based organizations in response to the RFA. It was suggested that CPS also partner with DFSS on drafting and advertising the RFA and providing technical assistance to bidders.
- CDB will take over management of the Chicago ECCG program after the selection of grant recipients.
- The process map currently does not include CPS submitting an application to CDB for the remainder of the ECCG funds available for the Chicago set-aside.

CPS expressed concern about the large number of applications it anticipates it will receive and how long the RFA process will take. The Governor's office proposed that it coordinate with the Governor's office to improve the RFA based on its experiences with the statewide competition. CPS agreed to partner with the Governor's office on this. It was noted that the RFA should be aligned to the statewide RFA but that the process can be improved while still maintaining general alignment. The committee also expressed concern that decision-making pursuant to the awarding of ECCG funds under the CPS RFA be as transparent as possible, including DFSS' involvement in that decision-making process.

CPS indicated that it would discuss internally on how to proceed with partnering with DFSS and requested that the committee put together some suggestions regarding this collaboration for CPS to consider. Finally, it was suggested that IFF may be interested in conducting another technical assistance webinar for organizations interested in applying to CPS for ECCG funds.

#### **Next steps:**

- Staffer will circulate electronic version of CPS process map to the committee.
- The committee will provide a list of issues for CPS to consider in its collaboration with DFSS regarding the RFA, as discussed during the meeting.
- Staffer will follow up with IFF regarding technical assistance webinar.

#### **2012 Planning**

The committee discussed potential areas of work moving forward this year. It was noted that the work plan would likely be revisited at the next meeting. Areas of work to explore include: continuing to assist CPS with implementation of the community-based portion of the Chicago set-aside of the ECCG program; advocating for another round of ECCG funding; providing assistance to non-

successful ECCG applicants; and educating other states about the work of the committee in securing capital funding for early childhood construction projects. A possible idea for the next meeting is to have Dr. Robert Goerge from the University of Chicago to speak about the upcoming national child care supply and demand survey that NORC will be conducting. In addition, it was noted that we have data on early childhood capacity but not very much data around quality. Perhaps a parent survey with a focus on facilities could be developed.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 pm. The next scheduled Space Capacity Committee meeting is April 27, 2012, from 1-3 p.m.